

N. Amer.-Indians

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THE NATIONAL  
INDIAN ASSOCIATION

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Originated 1879

Incorporated 1887

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A  
Navajo  
Life Saving Station

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156 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

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1945



The Good Samaritan Hospital, Indian Wells, Arizona

# A Navajo Life Saving Station

At Indian Wells on the uplands of north-east Arizona stands the Good Samaritan Hospital and Dispensary erected by The National Indian Association. No other medical station is within reach of large numbers of these Navajo Indians and they come long distances to the hospital for help. Dr. C. J. K. Moore, the resident physician, also visits their camps, gives emergency treatment and brings to the wards cases needing hospital care. In the two years since the hospital was opened nearly 3,500 treatments have been given and more than one hundred patients have been cared for in the wards.

The Navajos are very superstitious and for generations have been under the influence of their medicine men. A Navajo mother brought her child to the hospital. It was suffering from a heavy bronchial cold, was given constant treatment during the night, and in the morning there was marked improvement in its condition. During the day the father came in a state of agitation and fear. He said that before the child was born a sister of its mother was bitten by a snake and died, and that was

the cause of the child's illness. He was sure, he said, "the white man's medicine would not do any good." The superintendent talked with him, but he insisted upon taking the child away to have a "sing" over it. A Navajo man was found who could "sing" the snake song, so they took the baby to a hogan about a mile distant, where they "sang" over it continuously that night and all the following day. The man returned to the hospital about midnight and said the child was dead.

Though the success of the hospital has been so marked that the influence of the medicine men has been considerably lessened, yet superstitious practices in the treatment of the sick still prevail. Recently Dr. Moore went to see a sick child in a camp about ten miles distant. After two hours' riding he reached the hogan, a single structure about fifteen feet square. Preparations were on foot to have a "big sing" over the child. Four sheep had been killed, which the women were dressing for the feast, for a Navajo family giving a "sing" must feed all who come to it. The sick child, two years old, was in its mother's arms and had no clothing on it, though the day was bitterly cold and the case one of bronchial pneumonia. In the hogan were three other women and sixteen children, all under the age of twelve, and all

very scantily clad. This was the family of one Navajo man.

Trachoma, a scourge of the Indian tribes, spreads very quickly among the Navajos, owing to their habits and the unsanitary conditions under which large families are crowded together in one-roomed hogans, with the bare earth for a floor. Notwithstanding this, the disease is being successfully combatted at the hospital and efforts are being put forth by the physician, with some measure of success, to remedy the evil conditions under which these Indians live. *About two thousand treatments have been given for trachoma, but there are other cases each day needing surgical skill and medical attention. Patients have been treated for tuberculosis, rheumatism, sores on head and body, swollen knee joints, ear and throat diseases, bronchitis, fever, ulcerated teeth, broken and fractured limbs, dislocated joints, abscesses, grippe, severe cuts and burns, concussion of the brain, and many minor ailments.*

Those who live in cities where medical skill abounds and hospitals and other institutions for the relief of suffering are numerous, can but imperfectly realize the conditions existing in places where no such relief is at hand and where the superstitious customs of the Indians add to the suffering of the sick. The hospital has no endow-

ment and the future of the work depends entirely upon the money contributed for its support. The sum of \$5,000 is needed to maintain it for twelve months, and we urgently appeal for your help. Your contribution, whatever the amount, will greatly aid at this time and will go directly toward the support of this medical work for a much-neglected tribe of Indians. Cheques may be made payable to Miss Anna Bennett, Treasurer, and sent to her, or to John W. Clark, Executive Secretary of The National Indian Association, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York.

*April, 1915.*

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#### THE NATIONAL INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

Annual Membership Fee .....	\$ 1.00
Life " " .....	10.00
Honorary " " .....	50.00

Patrons are made such by the payment of \$25.00 within the year.

THE INDIAN'S FRIEND, now in its twenty-eighth year, is published by the Association bi-monthly. Price 50 cents a year.

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A Navajo Hogan